VISIT…

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SPECIAL EDITION

Graffiti

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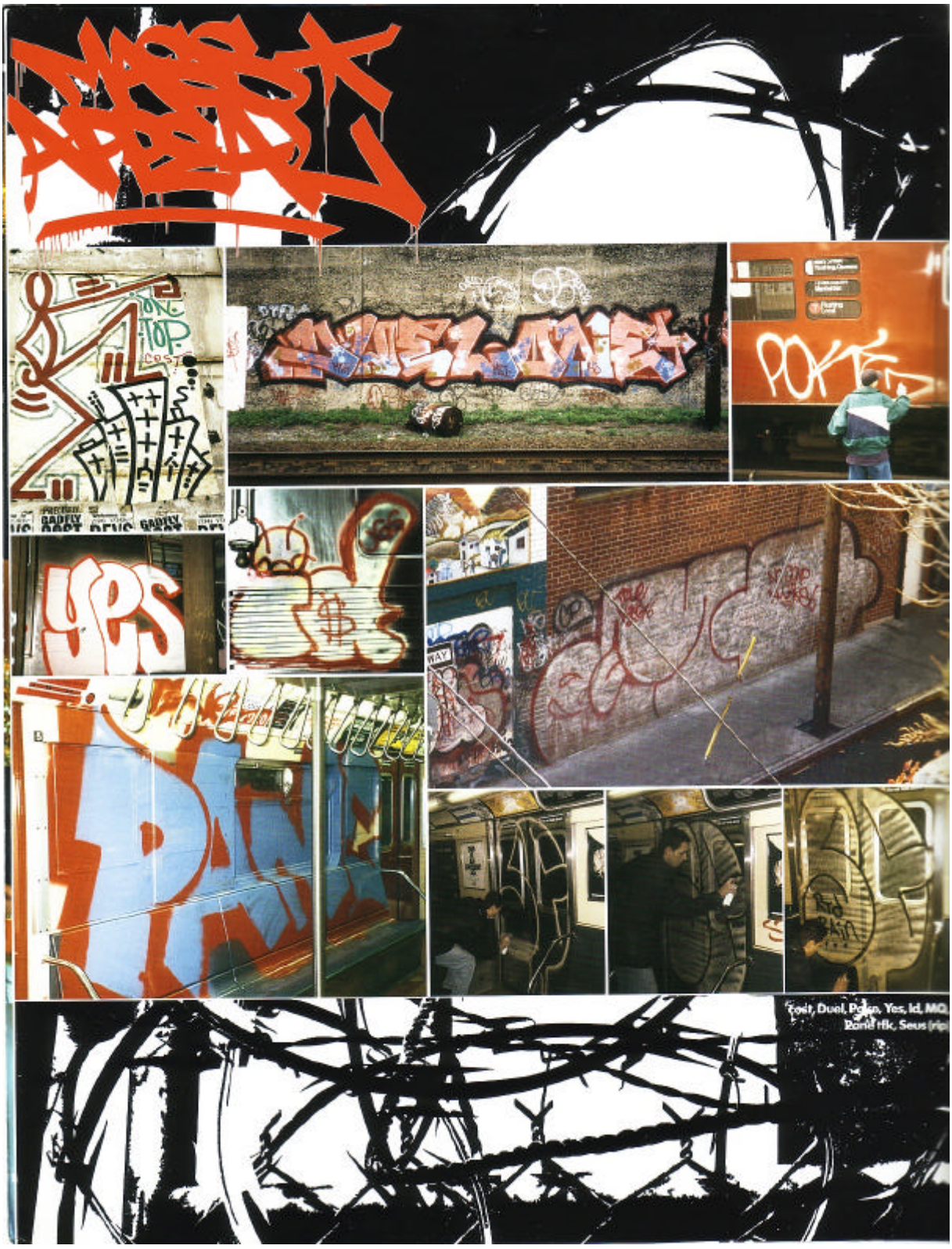

Cost, Duel, Poke, Yes, Id, MQ,
Daniel Hc, Seus (rip)

Back in April Mass Appeal sat down with SET, JD and SMERK at JD's house and talked about graff. As usual, the stories poured out. Here, the three writers talk about what they saw, how they got into graff and other ill tales of escape.

Origins

SET: I guess it was during junior high school that I decided to write. What attracted me to graffiti were the pieces and the colors. The trains mostly caught my attention with mopped down insides and the blinking lights. It really inspired me. I don't think the streets were as bombed, because there was no reason to bomb the streets. The medium was writing on trains. That's where most of it was seen. I've always had an interest in it.

JD: I didn't notice graffiti until I was like 16, maybe 15; 'cuz there wasn't much of it out here. Whenever I went anywhere else, there would be graffiti, especially in Brooklyn. But around here, I can't lie, my man SET influenced me, my man, PSI and the whole family, he was crazy.

SET: Actually, the way I met JD was funny, we almost got busted with this kid wrote PSI. When I met up with PSI, he showed up with JD before I knew him. Back then, JD didn't really write too much. So me and this dude PSI ended up climbing up onto a rooftop of a department store called Loehmans. The roof of the department store was probably two stories high. Along the side - you cant just climb up to the rooftop - there was an overpass near a highway, it was one of those walkways that zig-zagged up to the roof. So JD was like the watch out and shit. This was the first time I met the guy. While we were doing our graffiti, I had just finished my fill-in and PSI was still doing his, we heard a banging on one of those hatches that open up to get onto the roof. Next thing I know, this security guard comes out with a gun! I hop off over the fence and as I'm running, I'm like, "J, you didn't alert us!" Meanwhile, this dude PSI who is unaware of the situation and still trapped on the roof, finally privy to the impending danger, he begins to run but has nowhere to escape to since the guard has semi-cornered him. The security guard doesn't know what to do, cuz how often does someone come up on the roof? It was a two-story building and it had a side that was flat except there was a little ledge that stuck out about three or four inches and this dude PSI hung down off of it! I thought I was going to watch my friend die! This guy just like slid down the side and half way down, just let go. He was like a Boy Scout type of kid; he knew what he was doing. And anyway, we got away.

SMERK (RPK): I'm younger than all of these guys, and when I started writing I was attending high school in Manhattan. I must've been about 15 or so. When I was taking the train into the city I used to sit in the corner seat on

the R train, you know that little two-seater spot, and I was like a little weirdo, with my head pressed against the window and all the people in the car looking at me funny. So I would look in the tunnels, and that's where graffiti first started to catch my attention - I remember seeing JD up a lot. JD and seeing fucking GHOST. That shit blew my mind. I was like, "Who is this guy?" I was seeing GH throwies everywhere I looked - GHOST, GHOST, GHOST. Like, everywhere you look you'd just see GHOST, you'd see FUZZ, his shit was sick too. That guy was just plain nasty! JD closer to here, and COST between 71st and 67th stops on the R. It was like there was a race between JD and Ghost.

SET: J's crazy. JD's known for, like, busting dudes up. Shit, J's like a superhero.
Once, I had beef with this dude and JD busted the guy up and then, like, took his paint. The kid was doing a piece and JD was like, "Why you fucking with my man?' JD just knocked that guy out. I mean, it was just funny. Like, all his boys are watching and everyone's doing a piece. The kid's half way done and JD's like, "Yeeeahh!" JD boxes the kid down and then, as the kid's watching, JD just picks up his paint and put it in his bag. And JD keeps saying, "Yeeeah, yeeeah!" and just walks off. Meanwhile, everyone's laughing at the dude and shit. It was funny 'cuz I'd always see JD fucking dudes up. But that's another part of graffiti: intimidation.

Just as much as the bombing, there's protecting your name because there'd be guys out there that'd write and just get dogged if they didn't have the respect. I guess getting famous is not just a matter of actually having your tag on the wall per se. Its, like, I have 20,000 tags here, but so what? It's also the crews you put up cuz that says, "Okay, you're down with these guys." A crew will enhance your tag. A certain crew will amplify your name. If your name gets thrown around enough, people start to notice you. Because that's the object. We're not talking about piecing here, cause that's a different ball game. I'm assuming we're talking about bombing. I think, when you see other people bombing, you want to go out and bomb. I always thought I had an insight. I'd see people and I'd think it was so easy, like, I was convinced that graffiti was a very easy thing to do and it was achievable, you know what I mean? Probably quicker than becoming, like, a doctor or something. You just kind of go out there and you write on the wall. The anonymity is very appealing.
SMERK: Believe it or not, School may have contributed to my writing graffiti. I didn't really like school, and graffiti was there waiting. And it gave me something to do, cause I think humans need a surrogate activity, or whatever you want to call it, and I think that's what graffiti was.

JD: That was why I first started. I thought that was the best thing to do was just go inside them tunnels -'cuz it was clean. All the walls in there were clean. You'd go into the city, though, they weren't clean. But out here in Queens, they didn't touch it. Nobody would touch them.

SMERK: Yeah, word. And as far as the neighborhood goes, it was all about seeing SET and COST up everywhere you look, especially COST on all those no parking signs, the ones with the green poles and shit, all of them had his tag on 'em.

SMERK: We could see how much influence graffiti has on itself, it's like a chain reaction. Graffiti's like cockroaches' man. It's like you get one, you get a hundred. You got to kill it as soon as one shows up. That's why, like, around here in Queens (Forest Hills, Rego Park) they clean it all the time, because, if someone does a tag on a wall and that shit runs, then someone else comes and does a fill-in on that wall, and once you see a fill in, you're going to come and do more shit. Graffiti thrives on itself. I'm telling you it's like cockroaches, or rats. Like the dirt of society!

Partners and Highways
JD: I bombed really hard with my nigga SET, right here, for a long time, from like '91 till like '95. I bombed with a lot of people.
I felt great after I bombed. Sometimes I wouldn't be able to sleep at night 'cuz I'd just be thinking about what I did. Bombing itself can be hard. It's tiring. It's like a job.
In, like, '95-'96 I met JA. We were bike messengers together. We met through Stack in Brooklyn. Me and JA were buggin' when we were introduced. Then we just started fucking around on the job, having our dispatcher hate us and shit. We'd go around and rack at every store and try going in for the big shit. We'd steal everything we possibly could. I still got creams from the Body Shop. We used to steal all that shit.

JD: SP used to have highways in Queens. I used to like doing highways. That was my fuckin' forte. To me it seemed very simple to do highways. MIRAGE and SAINT were guys I'd see up when I was a kid. Yo, you know how much of a rush it is to fuckin' be there and cars speeding by, honking, and you're out there doing your shit [and] all this paint is all over the place. And the next day you're smoking weed and driving by, and you're seeing your shit up there, it's dope man.

Racking, Getaways and Central Booking
JD: I mean, when you start out, you buy your paint, but when you start bombing you just rack, rack, and rack. You get better at racking. But it's essential cuz it just all falls in line with the whole painting thing.

SET: I think graffiti is synonymous with being a fucking derelict. It's synonymous with getting high, stealing, and just doing bad things. Good kids don't write graffiti.

SET: Yo J, were you in there with me when there was that bum and he was mad stinky and everybody was bustin on him cuz he stunk? You've got to watch yourself when you are in central Booking. Everybody else has been arrested for a different crime and you don't know who you're dealing with. They're going to jack your sneakers and shit. You can't fall asleep, you can't use the bathroom, it's all fucked up.

I got chased with JA once in a car. We were bombing and it was down by the West Side Highway, near the sanitation facility. We had parked a block away from the spot we intended to hit. JA had his paint on his person so he got out of the car and headed toward the wall to start doing graffiti. While I was going into my trunk to get my paint these two cops come in an unmarked car. And they're like yo, "Up against the wall." And I'm watching it as it goes down. He's up against the wall and he's pretty much busted. They walked towards him, cornering him from both ends. So I was like "Oh shit." I got back in my car and opened the passenger side door and turned off my headlights. I pulled up right in front of them and I'm like, "Yo, JA" and no one knows what's going on. These cops didn't know I was with him, and he looks and I'm like, "Come on." JA jumps into my car like it was something out of the Dukes of Hazard and

shit. He comes in the car and before the door's even closed, I'm flooring the pedal trying to get out of there, and these guys are following me "in hot pursuit". This was in Manhattan at night. I'm going down one-way avenues, literally cutting through traffic, flooring the fucking gas pedal. I was like yo, this is wild shit but it was fun at the same time. Anyway, we got away but it was just wild man. We were just going down one way streets and eventually we lost those guys. once you get caught for graffiti and go through the system,
it's not all that big of a deal. albeit, you take almost every effort to not get caught whatever it might be, like risking your life. It's almost like watching these cop videos. Like the guy who has expired car registration doesn't want to get stopped by the cops, meanwhile goes on this wild chase for like a pretty, petty offense, and it turns into something much larger.
There have been times when I'm getting chased and I'm, like, "Yo, God, I'll never write graffiti again, just get me out of this one!"

SET: I fell off a roof once, doing a roof top. It was dark out, I was running, and the next thing I know, I was, like, running through the air. I was like, "Oh, my god! I'm going to die of graffiti." It took about two seconds for me to hit the ground, and I didn't even hit the ground. I ran off the roof and there was this gap, like a building was missing, and then there was just the next roof top. It was out on the J line, and I ran off the roof. You're running at top speed in the dark, and I was younger so I wasn't hip to shit. I didn't realize that I didn't have to run in that situation, because I saw cops on the platform and we were on the roof top and I didn't know the severity of whether I was going to get caught or what. I'm running and the next thing you know, I'm running through air and I'm like, "Oh, my God!" And I'm thinking as I'm going down, "I'm going to die of graffiti!" Then I fuckin' hit the wall of the next rooftop, kind of like when Homer Simpson's jumping the canyon, and then I bounced down. There was a lot of rubbish, like plank boards, like I said, the building was almost knocked down. I hit that shit and I was lying there, and I was with this kid SU. He was looking down and I was just laying there. And as I'm laying there I'm like, "Oh my God, I'm still alive." And this dude SU's like, "Yo, are you alright?" And then he burst out laughing. Because you know, we always laugh when people get hurt. He was like dying laughing 'cuz he saw the whole thing. We got away. But you go to great lengths not to get caught.

cost, free5, fz, kors, tric, duel, ghost, dash, ceo, cycle, muse, duel, ap, kr

nato and the 7 Line

7

7

Starting in Flushing and slowly rumbling through the streets of Queens, the 7 line became an infamous, must bomb line on any NY writers agenda. But it wasn't always so. The transformation of the 7 from a suburban, graff-less line into one of the most constantly hardest bombed lines was long in coming.

The first king of the line, after Koch (the old NY mayor who turned the 7 into the "White Elephant'),was SHEER. That nigga had the right idea. He sewed up like, eight of the first prime spots on the line. He had that spot right when you pull out of 74th St. heading towards Flushing on the Manhattan bound side, the spot BRUZ has now, behind the satellite dish.

I remember being seven or eight sitting on my knees in the 7, my face pressed to the glass, eyes wide in awe at the pieces whizzing by on the roofs facing the line.

Around this time was when I started scribbling my first toy tags around the way. I had every pole in the neighborhood on smash. It wasn't till about 88' that I did my first roof. I was thirteen at the time and didn't know anything about where or how to rack paint.

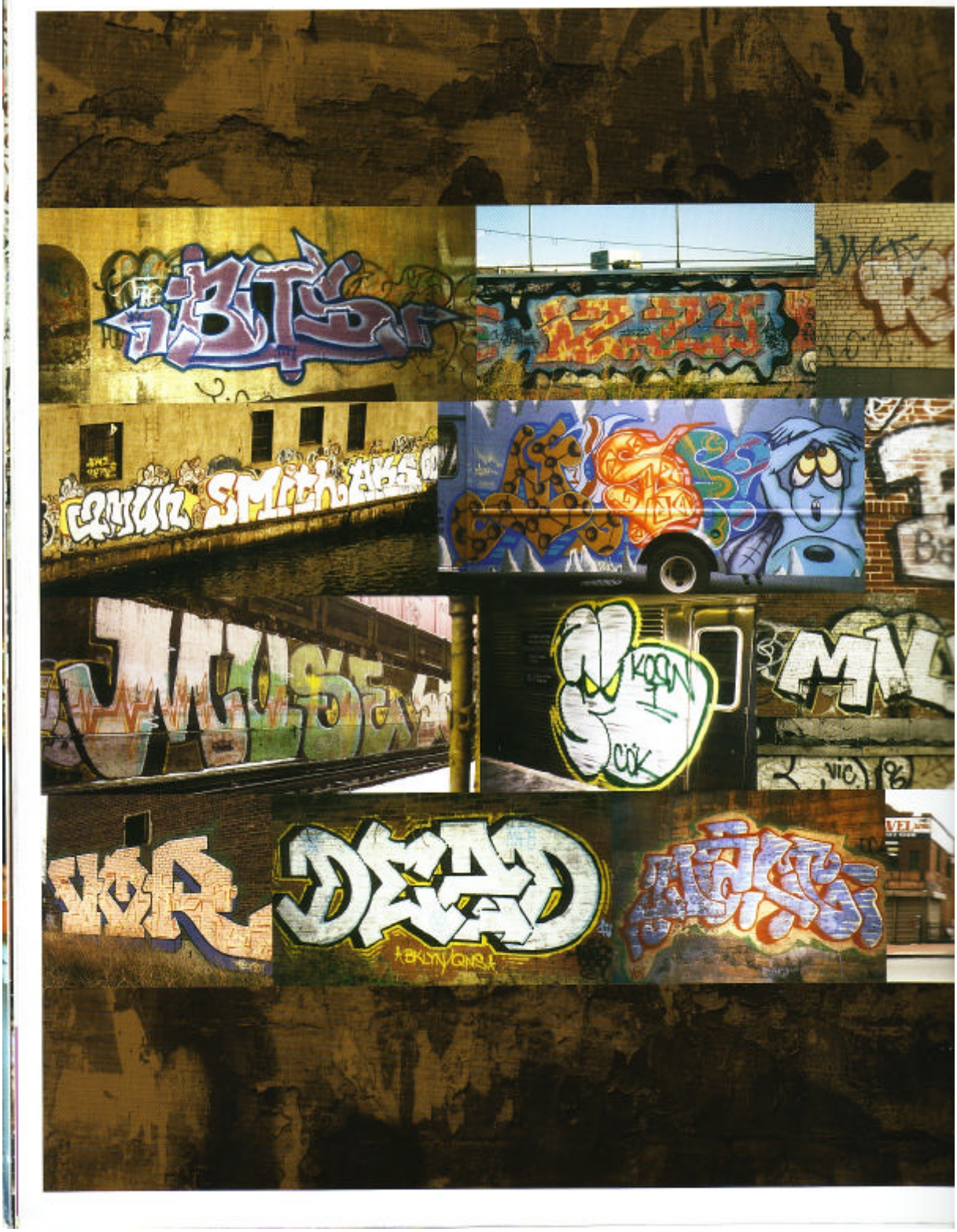
One day, I was scoping out this roof on top of a Key Food in Elmhurst when there, behind an air vent was a present: a brand new Touch & Tone silver can, just laying there. I quickly glanced around and dug the can out from behind that shit. I looked around once more, not believing what I had found, and stuffed the can into my shorts as I raced home. "What was I going to do with it?" I thought. No. The question was where.

MYSE & NODE, two trail blazing writers, had recently done two joined roofs atop an apartment building overlooking the 90th St. train station. It was tight. Characters and everything. Anyway, I was ready to take a piece. I wish I had some ill story about being chased or sneaking out but it wasn't like that, at least not the first time.

The first roof I did was on top of U.S.A. Skates, the place where they filmed the Rock Steady vs. Dynamic Rockers battle in 'Style Wars.' I darted up some telephone wires in the back, spray can safely tucked under my belt, ready for action. I knocked out my first outline pretty quickly. It was still daylight but I came off without a hitch. It wasn't too good but, at the time, it was the shit. I jetted home, not really realizing or giving much thought to, the impact of what I had done.

Monday comes and I get to check out my handywork on the way to Junior High 125. I run into class, sit down at my fully bombed, wooden, bolted down desk, and start to finish my piece on the back of my school bag when Lynette comes over. Lynette was this Puerto Rican cutie with stupid big tits for thirteen(you remember). Well, she rolls up & says, "Hey you write NATO, right?" I'm thinking, "Yeah, no doubt, I've only been in your class for the last 6 months." But I play it cool and just say, "Yeah." trying, as hard as I can, not to look at her chest. "I saw some roof you did on the way to school today," she says. "It was cool." Just like that.

Then she turns on her heels and struts off. Needless to say I was gassed in a way I've never known before. That feeling is quite addictive. A few tags later, I hook up with BRUZ. He was thirteen and as wet behind the ears as I was, but we were both hungry. I can remember sneaking out of my house with him at 2 a.m., picking him up in the alley along side of his house. He was always a big motherfucker, and he would toss his bag out the window and jump out, making a huge racket. That was so much fun, young and doing whatever we wanted. We bombed like fiends. We wrote on everything, with everything. That lasted a year and we grew apart, as in all friendships; shit happens. He started rolling with SMITH and SANE, and I started rolling with FUZZ ONE. FUZZ was twenty-eight at the time, and he was more than happy to take me under his wing. He put me onto mad shit. I would cut out of class all the time to go to his house and listen to train raid stories and rack missions. He took me to all the train spots: the 1 tunnel, the 6 yard, 75th Ave., the B lay-up in Queensbridge, everywhere. He took me on my first rack mission to Long Island. It was me, GHOST, RONT, FUZZ and SAR, hitting up all the spots. I never had so much paint in my life. That was the shit! This is in '90-'91, when they started the comeback on the trains. I got into some extra-curricular trouble and had to lay low for a while and couldn't take part in the fun, but I still went over for stories. I stayed on the low till about '94 when shit started poppin' off on the 7 again. Niggaz from other boroughs were coming out and bombing the line hard, but I wasn't going to let anyone take my line. I started wreckin' shit every night. I did every roof I know. I was hungry like I'd never eaten. I did it for Queens. I rep Queens. Every time I get up, the borough gets up. The rest is history. I'll tell you about it when we bump into each other on the 7. Look for me. I'm the kid with his face pressed to the glass, eyes still wide in awe, on the line I was lucky enough to be a part of.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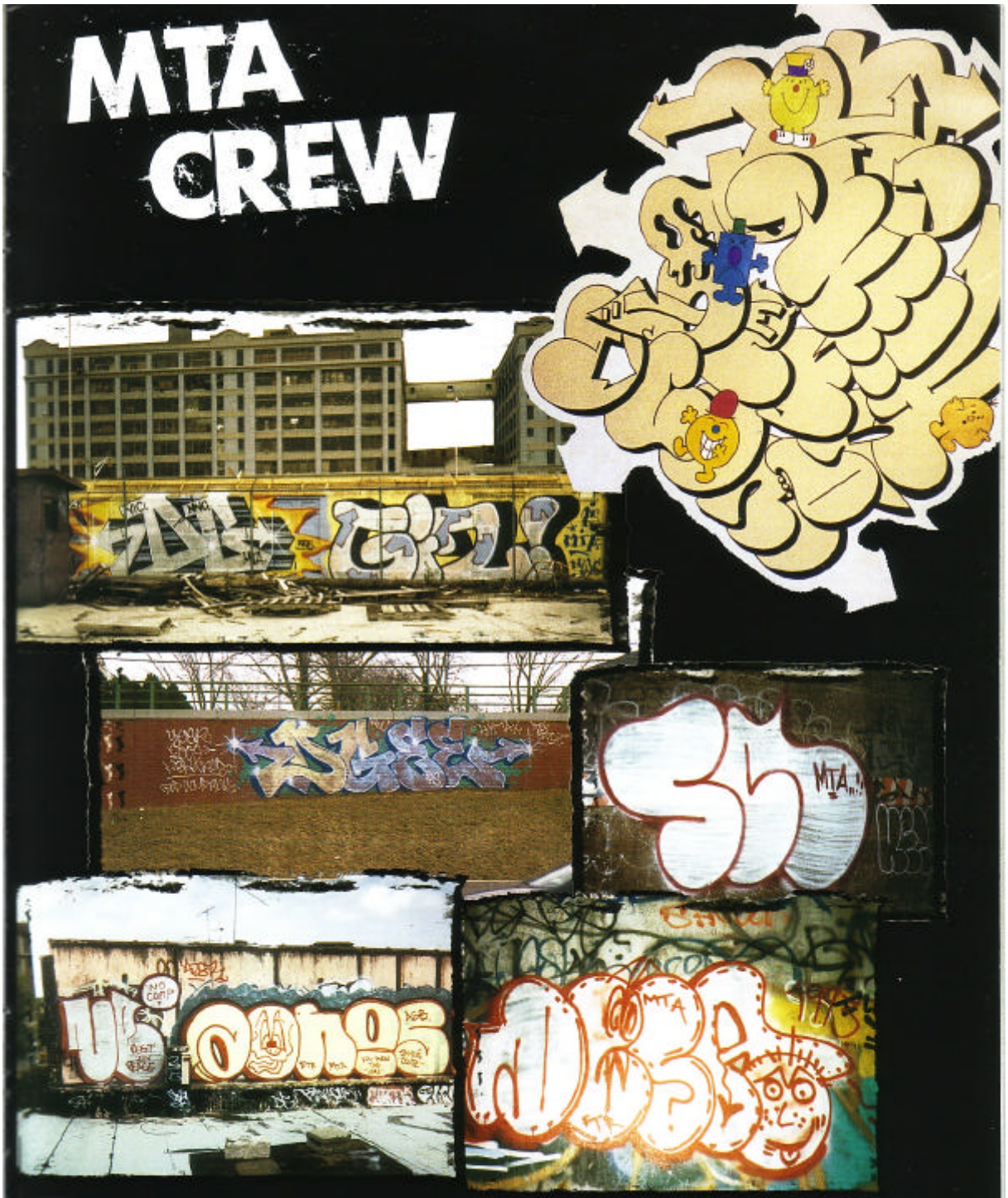
MTA CREW



MTA crew comes from a neighborhood surrounded by cemeteries. Anyone that's ever been to the area where Queens meets Brooklyn, (Ridgewood, Glendale, Bushwick), knows they were in a place like no other. People that have come to know us over the years sometimes say that there must be something in the water we drink that makes us the way we are, because we're all alike in a sense! I personally think it's the dozens of cemeteries we're surrounded by. Whatever it is, it's the place where it all started for the MTA crew.

Growing up in NYC can lead a kid down one of two paths: good or bad. I, unfortunately, took the bad. But the ironic thing about this was that every kid I knew was going the same way, so it didn't seem that bad. Anyway, around the time when the trains started getting cleaned, I started hanging out with this crew called FTR, which stands for Fuck The Rest. Every single weekend there were these HUGE keg parties up in Forest Park. A lot of people reading this might have either been at them or have heard about them. This was the place I hooked up with a lot of the original MTA crew: VE, SLASH, VENA, DESA, XIST, SN, MAG, JC3, AONES, CHEL, CI, SPANKY, TEF, THEME, CEND, ASP, and many, many others. These keg parties had at least 500 people daily, and over 1000 on some occasions. There was music, alcohol, and, most importantly, girls. Hundreds of girls would come to these parties in little cliques. And the best part about it was, there would be new girls every week! It was the ultimate place.

Right behind the park there's a huge golf course. That's the best thing about Forest Park, the golf course was a place to go when cops tried to raid us. We just picked up the kegs and brought them back there and the cops didn't know how to get in there. The golf course, especially on the really short grass, was also a good place to bring the sluts and get laid.
One time when I was back there, butt naked with a slut, the automatic sprinklers went on while I was in action. Those were the good times, but there was also a dark side to this place.

When you have hundreds of kids hanging out with a bunch of girls and beer, there's competition, which leads to fights. I've seen more rugged fights in Forest Park than anywhere else, except when I was locked up in Riker's Island for a few months. The problem was that the parties were getting too well known for the amount of beer and endless supply of hot girls. This brought other crews around, which wasn't good. For some reason, the kids from MTA & FTR didn't get along with a lot of people. We never set it off on people for no apparent reason, but we've all been through a lot of tough and real situations. And we don't act like fake thugs: we act how we are. There's no pretend world out there that a lot of kids live in. So, when we're around some people and we see that they're phony, or putting on a front like they're tougher than a muffin, we get offended and things happen. Besides, MTA is a lot bigger crew than people know. It's not just a graffiti crew. There are a lot of people down that don't write. But for those that do write, there's only a handful. The reason being is that we don't just throw people down that we meet once or twice. You have to be "down". It's much better to have a tight crew with a few heads than a large crew of strangers, because those types of crews don't last. The reason MTA kids are so tight is because we all live on the same level of mind. It's hard to explain but it's like, if you're around a bunch of people, or you're bombing, or even doing something illegal, if something ill is about to go down, MTA kids could just look at each other and know what each other are thinking, ready to take each others' back no matter what. That's just how it is.

I remember a time I went bombing in 1993 with ASP WTO from the old school. ASP is one of the wildest people I know. I met him through my cousin TR and MAG FYA. We were walking home from drinking all night at a party. ASP talked me into bombing the M yard. I didn't really want to go because I was wrecked, but I did. I followed him down the catwalk from Fresh Pond Road into the yard where we wrote on every train in sight. We took pictures after each fill-in, in case we got chased. Anyway, one of the guards and the work bums saw us bombing on one of the yellow work trains. I took my last photo quickly so we could break out. The problem was that ASP didn't want to go anywhere. He picked up a huge wooden club and said, "Let's take the yard!" We ran straight for the guard and the work bums were screaming. I thought we were going to end up in jail for assault or something, but the guard and workers ran away from us. The vision of a six foot tall Puerto Rican, hanging a four foot club against the train, running at them full speed at 3a.m. scared the living shit out of them! We started laughing so hard that I fell to the floor. It was a good idea to bounce because they were sure to call the cops. So we walked the catwalk, bombing roofs and poles to Seneca Ave., which was three stops away from the yard. As we got on the platform of the train station, we saw a man standing not too far away from us. He looked like a regular guy, so we walked up toward him until suddenly we realized he was a uniformed cop with no hat on. We bolted down the platform the same way we came and I jumped off the platform with a heavy school bag of paint. I was in the air for a long time and when I landed, I rolled over from the impact with the cop landing right behind me. I ran as fast as my feet could carry me behind ASP trying not to get my feet caught in between the boards of the old school catwalk, which had boards missing. This 'super cop' must have used steroids or just sniffed some coke because I'm fast, and I could run for a long time, but he was quick. I saw flashlights of more cops on the next station in front of us. A train came, which gave us the opportunity to jump across fast and lose the cop on the move behind me. We quickly slid down the poles into some backyards without the cops seeing us. We saw the sirens all over in the streets so we had to hide out for a little while. Luckily, there was a pool three yards away; it was hot as hell. Climbing over into the next yard, we got chased by a huge pit bull. But finally we made it to the pool and cooled off. After about ten minutes, ASP told me to get out really quick. He took a shit in the pool and it was floating around! That was funny as hell. He's an ill MTA character. There are a lot of crazy things that happened to us while we would go bombing.

One time, I was doing a supermarket rooftop on the J line with SN and VE. It was snowing out and there was about six inches of snow on the ground. Anyway, somehow, the cops knew we were up there; and there was only one way up or down, so they waited for us to climb down. On the other side of the roof there was a 2 story drop straight down.
I looked at VE and told him, "You jump first and if you make it, I'll jump after you."
SN was too big for the jump, so he had to go down where the cops were. After arguing about who's going to jump first, I took the plunge into the

snow. VE jumped after me. We didn't move for about two minutes because the impact was ruff. Laying in the snow, looking up, we saw SN on the roof, pissed off that he couldn't jump down. The cops drove by us and gave us a hard look, but they didn't think we were the kids from the roof after seeing the height of the jump.

Another time, I was writing on the side of an overpass on the Grand Central Parkway with JA XTC in the freezing cold. JA had gloves, I didn't. I was holding on to the metal beams with one hand and the other hand was doing fill-ins. Meanwhile it's about 10 degrees out, windy, and there's high speed traffic right under our feet. I couldn't feel my hand holding the metal. I almost let go because I couldn't hold on, but I made it and the fill-ins looked fresh.

On the 7 line me, VE, and SN were doing a fire escape when a maniac stuck a gun to my head while I was doing a fill-in. He thought we were robbing his house, but when he found out we were bombing, he asked us to put him up.

MTA kids are a wild bunch. Everywhere we go, we make our presence felt. When we hit the club scene, we always ended up robbing bags, drug dealers, and getting into fights until we got kicked out. We actually closed down a club on 14th street after we beat the shit out of the bouncers inside the club. Then, when we got outside, they locked us out because they were scared. So we sent in two girls to open the back fire door, then we stormed in and beat the shit out of everybody and took the turntables. We actually housed a pair of turntables from every club in NYC. At all the clubs in NYC we're known by all the bouncers because of the shit we've done. VE got punched by one of those huge motherfuckers once. Those guys must eat people to get that big. We were also the first kids to sell vitamins as ecstasy back in 1991. We did a lot of shit that people didn't know was us.

We went to Roseland to see the Alkoholiks one time and ended up on stage with them drinking Heinekens. It's funny, out of a crowd of 5000, they picked six MTA kids from the crowd. My boy TEF grabbed the mic and rhymed with them, then gave out shouts on the mic to me, VE, CHEL, CI, ESC, SPANKY. After the concert we went back stage and into the tour bus where we hung out with them. I ended up having a drinking contest with one of the kids on the bus and he won. The kid got offended so we almost had a conflict, but the Alkoholiks were mad cool. It was just one hot headed kid that had too much to drink. The Alkoholiks still keep in touch with TEF, SPANKY, & CHEL.

Those are just some of the things we did. Anyway, after VE died, everybody started calming down. His death had a big impact on all of our lives. He was a part of the MTA crew that added a spark to everything.

It's funny how a lot of older people used to tell me when I was growing up that most of their friends were either dead or in jail, because now it's true for me also. James died shortly after I got out of jail while I was awaiting trial for attempted murder. I was facing 4 to 9 years. Being locked up, I found out who my real friends were and how fast people stab you in the back and forget about you. Around this time I had a few fights and I got stabbed on three separate occasions. Everything sucked and I was a ticking time bomb waiting to explode. My addiction to drugs just made everything that was unbearable worse! At that point in my life, I gave up on everything until I met Janine, my girl. She showed me that there was a lot more to life than I knew. She's my inspiration and my reason for letting go of the anger in the past and giving me a reason to move on to the future. I love her more than anything.

MTA CREW: VE, XIST, J-9, DESA, KECH, CHEL, CI, JA, JD, ANDA, DG, SLASH, SN, THEME, TEF, SPANKY, VENA, HUSH, ASP, MAG, JC3, CEND, FADE, EDIT, KI, KUE, NEVA, SHAK, SABE, AND WHOEVER SLIPPED MY FRIED BRAIN

PEACE -GIZ MTA

bruz interviewed by nato

"Damn, son! You got paint!!" That's the first thing I saw when I got to Bruz's crib: That nigga had a fully stocked, hardware style, paint rack. And when I say fully stocked, man, I mean bursting with classic Krylon hot pinks, pastel yellows and jungle greenz.
"No doubt," Bruz said laughingly.
He was in his kitchen in shorts and chonchetas, frying chicken for his kids. "Sit down," he told me, "You want some beer??" "You don't have to ask me twice." As he grabs a 40 from his freezer, I start to go through his dope collection of flix. He hasn't been bombing too hard lately, so its easy to forget how hard one nigga' has crushed. "Queenz! Wha"!Wha!'" Bruz says, as I turn on the tape recorder. I crack the forty and sip it.

N: I figured I'd get the easy questions out of the way first. So what do you write?
B: Bruz One Taking Over Crue
N: How do you spell it ? Cause' I've seen up Bruz and Brewz.
B: The original way was 'Bruz'. I just had it in my mind, change it up, ya know. I like to rock the different letterz. I want to be one of the only writerz doin' that . That makes me, Me.
N: What does Graff mean to you?. Why do you do it?
B: Well, when I first started, I liked the street recognition. But as I kept going, graff meant everything to me. Now that I'm older, its lost a little meaning but it still has that thing.
N: What kept you with it? The fame, the high?
B: Everything. I was always into stuff that wasn't too legal, so bombing was an outlet for me. There was nothing else but that lifestyle the time.
N: Was doin graff a good thing?
B: Hell, Yeah! I only regret not bombing harder. (Laughter)
B: I regret I can't bomb much anymore. I got caught for sum bullshit. I'm on probation; I've been arrested like 8 times for graff.
N: Are you still writing?
B: Oh yeah, I'll neva stop, but like I said...
N: A six month vacation?
B: (Laughing) More like a 3 year vacation it seems like. I've also got rent now, [and] kids. It's a lot harder to go bombing
N: How do you get your point?
B: Back in the days I would rack like a fiend. I would rack and rack. Niggaz put me on to spots in L.I. and out of state. Now, I buy 2 and rack like 10 at your local spot.
B: What's up with the legal wall scene? What do you think?
B: Truthful, legal walls are the future. Cause, yo, 10 years ago, you would go out and not see one cop. 5 years ago you go out and see some cops. Now , its an everyday thing. It's crazy! 5-0's are arresting niggaz' in the D.M.S. pits. 5-O's are bagging you for everything. We used to hit them pitz drunk [back] in the day.
N: Does it change graff?
B: Yeah, you've got to give it a new name, legal graffiti, that's what it is. Legal graffiti. It's not graffiti anymore but, still, that's the future. In another 10 years there's gonna be 5 O's everywhere. It's not like it was back in the day. A cop would catch you and beat you up and for running, say, "Why are you running for Graffiti?" But they would let you go. Now all those " quality of life" offenses are the shit and you've got Guilianni 666 in office. He wants to stop food vendors and taxi drivers. He wants to regulate that shit like it was Cuba... Shit, he wants to regulate which side of the street you walk on.
N: What do you think of Scratchiti?
B: That shit is the most obscure form of graffiti there is. Save it for the toyz. I've scratched every window in a car before, I aint gonna lie, but i can't see myself doing it again, cause you are lowering yourself. Cause' if you get bagged for that, you may as well get bagged for hitting them shits with ink.
N: What do you like to bomb?
B: I used to love to bomb trains, but its crazy nowadays. If I had to choose, bombing a yard is definitely the ultimate high. Bombing a whole yard, doing pieces, running around with your bags and just doing throw-ups and fill ins everywhere, just going nuts and dropping like 30 cans; it's an ultimate rush. I also have to say rooftops are one of the phattest things cause, every roof is a different experience. You gotta' know when to go; to go you need climbing skillz. Fuck it , whatever was bombed, I liked to bomb.
N: Who are you down with?
B: Straight up, I went back and forth for a while. It took a minute to find out who my true boyz really were, but now I consider myself straight up Queenz. I want to rep' Queenz all the way. The only crues I rep' when I bomb to this day are Takin Over, cause that's all I ever wanted to do. I rep NATO's Crue, Rising Artists, 'cause we started together. I rep B.S., which is Bomb Squad, which is my man Teck's Crue, so I rep his Crue. He bombz hard and is a big part of Queens, ya know. I'm really into the Queenz thing. It's really in the past few years that I think Queenz is the shit.
N: You ever gonna' quit?
B: They could lock me up for a year, I'll come out and still want to do something. I'm never quitting.

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Aaaaaaaand in The Big Time Corner, in the marlin blue trunks with the odikhaki trim, bombing straight out of Astoria, Queens, rrrrrrrrepresenting The Super Squad and Big Time Boys, KaaaaaaayArrrrr Onnnnnnnne!!!

KR: It started in the summer of '77, my boy MACE had pictures of an MC2 throw up he did on the double R's layup on 36th Avenue in Astoria. I said, "You're crazy." And he said, "Nah."
My first tag was TAG 3. Mace said, "Yo, Lou, that's toy." So I changed my tag to KROME. I was just doin' streets and paper then. And he told me about KROME 100 SALSA Crew, so I shortened to KR. It meant KRAZY (W)RITER. That was '77, '78.
I started doin' pieces in, like, '79: like fill-ins and stuff, with SICK NICK 108, and KB TSS, ROBERT 78. MACE had a clique called IRT (Invading Rapid Transit), that was the first clique I was in.
In 1979, me, SN, CHI CHI133 (original CHI CHI's little brother), and this dude TEXT2, went to the M yard, first time I ever did a piece on a train. I did a KR straight letter with some blends. I remember goin' to Yankee games, and seein' MAFIOSO One on the insides. Then I met DON 1, original MAFIA president. MACE knew all those guys. DYNAMITE SPEAR, DS3, DEAN BYB... DEAN gave me outlines, old CHI CHI 133, and TRACY168, and FUZZ ONE... I got some style from those guys.

Then my piece partner became FOME ONE (FOMESTER, PANCHO) and we did a whole bunch of window downs wholecars on the M's and J's. We wrecked the M yard. Me, FOME, PAZE (Ernil), this kid KING SIZE, and MIDGE hit the 2's & 5's at esplanade, we did 5 top to bottom whole cars in a row.

KoJak: Oh dip! That train's in Subway Art!
KR: Yeah, that whole train was my outline. Henry [Chalfant] gave me no props. I did my piece with a BODE, jumpin' Chinese dude in the middle. FOME did a FOME. That was the last piece I ever did on a train, that was winter '82.
One time me & FOME hit the M yard. I did a KR burner window down wholecar, with a Howard the Duck, and the workbums started throwin' bottles at us, so we hid under the train. Next thing I know, the conductor is movin' the train, and my leg was right next to the wheel and the shit almost ran me over. That was wild shit.

Kojaksterizm: How'd you get your paint?
Rackin up, FUZZ ONE took us around his neighborhood and showed us how to rack Bustelo from the supermarket and sell it to the bodega, wear bell bottoms and put like 2 cans in your socks and then tuck your shirt with a thermal, walk out with like 10 or 12 cans. Me & FOME racked 14 cans each from Cherrette, they had all the dope colors, Icy Grape, Caterpillar Yellow, we housed 14 cans each, on our person, no bags. Then you go rack up Niagra fat caps, maybe somebody would pop up wit a old Jif-Foam cap.
I stopped bombin' in '82... and started playin' drums and music became my life, although since then I've been sporadically doin' pieces, like storefronts, CD cover art, t shirts, and canvases. Writing was always in my blood.
What really brought me back out was the passing of my younger brother, who wrote RKS. I did a memorial piece for him, and since then I've burned like 8 or 9 times.
I met this dude SEUS, who, unfortunately, passed away, he was real cool with a lot of stuff, my boy WHISP TDK (HESCHER - Warner Brothers) and my man BIONIC, he's younger guy with old school style, like from 1972, we recently did a few pieces with TEAM, WHISPER, MACKIE, EB and SIOR TKC. It's really cool Mass Appeal is givin' light to Queens writers, they didn't always get their props. Ill burner dudes like CAINE One, SON & PRO, FUZZ ONE, KB TSS, CEY, CITY, DEMO, FLAME ... Also props to DON1, president of MAFIA, DEAN BYB, JAC THE RIPPER, BIT, RCA IRT, SMOKE TKC, KIK NSG, SIKO TB, TEK2 (original B.T.), JOB One TSW, AS2, T59, MACE, KS3, FOME ONE, CEAR, and 2 MINT.
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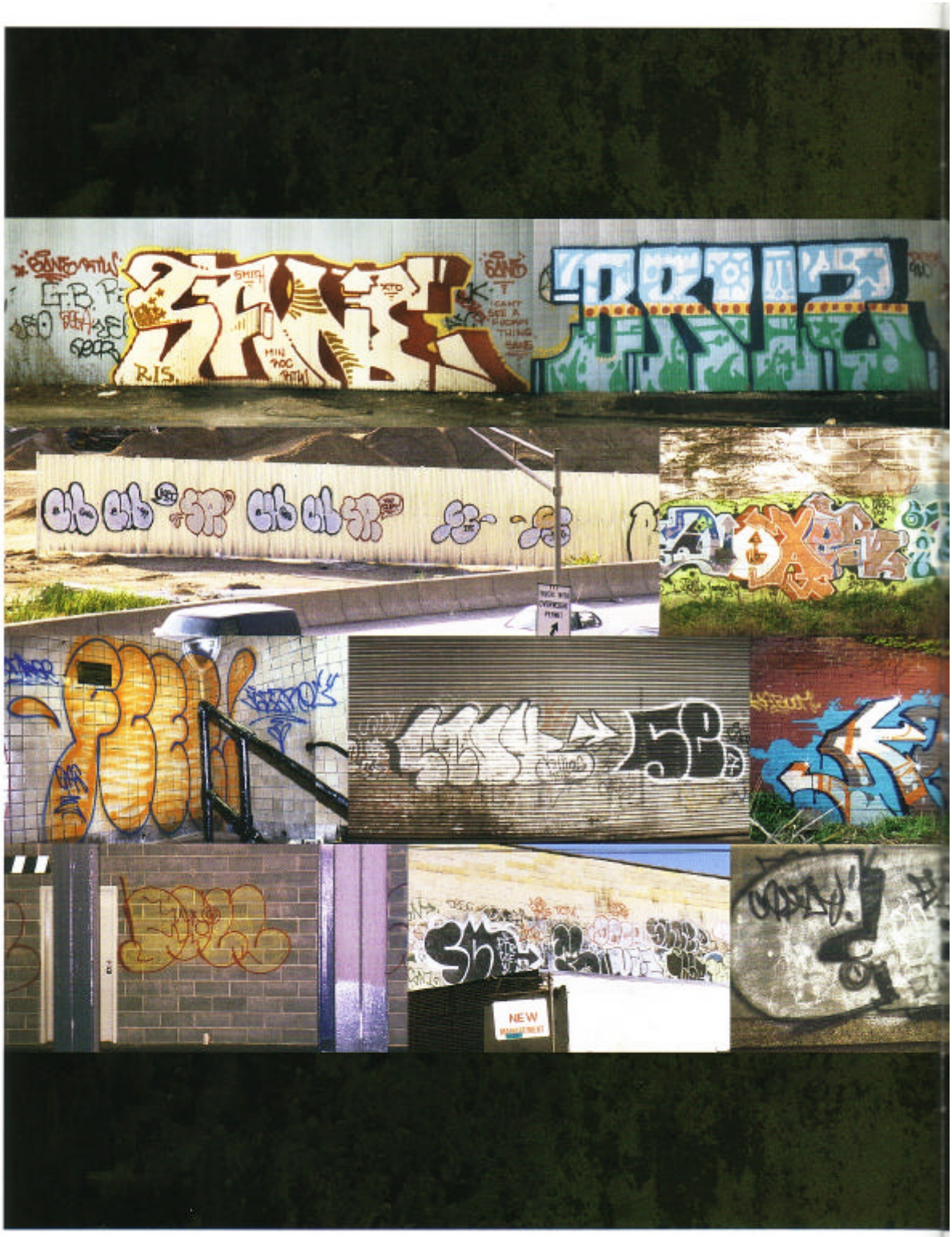
I CAN'T SEE A FROWN THING
NEW

sane, krux, smith sp free cnk, ce ce nasne, nach, stak kab ce sane eros uend mirage vaz 7line bombing

Aks & teck

TECK and AKS came through the office and dropped some knowledge on their Borough. After a few drinks we couldn't make out who said what...

-It's funny, the people I think of that bomb streets in Queens aren't even
from Queens.

-The first writers that bombed the streets in Queens were from the Bronx. JAWZ,TEKAY, JEW, MOZ2 in the mid eighties and early eighties. But, mostly Queens was known for its highways, and that was SAINT, DUEL, TRAP, FIB, COOZ all the way from Fresh Meadows, Fresh Meadows and Bayside, that's who mostly hit the highways, TMR and LOD and JA. SP, DASH. He went out with a couple other cats out there, this guy MA, MA used to hit highways, LASH, KAC used to hit a lot of highways...

ins over everybody.

BRUZ ain't doing anything right now, he just had a baby boy last month, his third kid. So he's not painting right now. SMITH is doing shit, but it's not like you can go out there and see it on a rooftop...

-He's just more into his freights, and permission spots, really.

- That's about it, basically nobody's doing anything no more. You're not going to start mentioning little kids names just cuz they're one year writers.

Queens is the strictest borough. I was locked up on a Monday night for breaking and entering, and assault with a deadly weapon. I got out of jail on Tuesday night, the judge let me go home. I go bombing Wednsday night, I get arrested again. I go to central booking and they give me a $5000 dollar bail for

there used to be a crew out there called TA7, The Amazing Seven, they used to rag everyone. They had a big crew too. They used to rob you on the train, they used to see you, they'd rob you. -Niggas beat me down on the train. I got a scar on my head.
-They robbed everyone! They robbed men, women. They used to be in the newspapers in the early 90's late eighties, they used to be in the newspaper for crazy killings. They used to kill a lot of people. Most of them are all in jail. First there was like 80 then there was like 300, they used to be from Woodside and Sunnyside area.
-They used to be at this park. You'd go over to that park at night and there'd be like a fuckin million kids in the middle of this park just going nuts.

-They were crazy man, and they had beef with DMS. DMS is pretty small. But
TA7 was, when I tell you big, them niggas was large! They didn't give a fuck. They'd just beat you down

-But the streets were started by other people from other neighborhoods, from either Manhattan or the Bronx or Brooklyn. But then it started with kids doing fill-ins everywhere instead of just having tags. In the early nineties there was a handful of people out there.
-You, BRUZ, COST...

-Yeah, COST, MQ, TRAKE. SET had a lot of street tags.Early nineties, mid-nineties, all the way til now. Ninety percent of the kids that are writing in Queens are a bunch of fuckin toys, and it's the truth. It's kids that just have nothing to do. They figure that there's a wall and just cuz it says '87 on it or '88, or '92, "Oh it's six years old, it's too old, you have to go over it." It's not dissed or anything; they just want to go over it cuz they're a bunch of little fucking toys.

-They started cleaning highways '92, '93. People still kept hittin them, but then eventually they kept wiping them down every single day and it was not even worth it. Even now, you hit em, they'll take it down in a day, two days. But street bombing over there, didn't really take off til '91, '92, first tags. The streets were filled with tags, you couldn't catch a tag without going over someone, you just had to start poppin fill-

graffiti, not for the fucking robbery, they don't give a fuck about the robbery, but for graffiti they want a $5000 bail. They dismissed the robbery case but they gave me 30 days community service and a $500 dollar fine for a fucking outline. That's how hard they are on graffiti.

COST got 1600 hours of community service. When me and TRAKE got caught we went to Court with the stupid thing, and they didn't even catch us doing it. All they caught was that we had paint on our hands. They tell TRAKE "You're going to have to do some community service." They tell me, "You're going to have to do some community service too, but yours is a violation, his is a misdemeanor." So I think alright, a violation is like a parking ticket. They tell me "You get 10 days community service." I was like "What the fuck, I thought you said some days not days and a week..." TRAKE was all happy he was like, "We're going to get community service, alright." He got 800 hours, which totals out to a hundred days! He paid people to do it and people fucked up on him, he didn't give a fuck, he never did it. If you don't do your community service, shit, they come to your house and pick your ass up at 1 o'clock in the morning....In the mid eighties, late eighties,

cuz you weren't from there or you weren't down with them.
-They beat me down kind of pussy style when I think about it, cuz there was like 10 of them and I was on the train by myself and some kid came up to me and he was like "Yo, you write graffiti?" and this when I first started writing, before I even came up with a throw-up. I told him I wrote and he's like "Why're you scheming on my fuckin girl?" or some shit like that and I was like "What are you talking about?" And the next thing I know I'm getting hit on the back of my head with an umbrella.
-About 10 years ago, me and Teck were sitting in the back of the train and we were like "Oh shit." We just see fuckin guys walking through the cars of the 7 line, all of the sudden they came in and looked at us and they're like "Who the fuck you down with?" and we're like "We ain't down with no one." This was like 11 years ago we were like 14., they're like, "Alright." And I heard one of them say "Yo, is in the next car with his girl, let's just beat him and his girl down." And they went two cars down, and you see them beating both of them down in the middle of the car. They beat him and his girl down.

-continued at messagetothog.com

desa vs. queens

by Desa & fns

Mid-January 1996. New Yorkers are in the midst of the biggest blizzard of the year. It is snowing so hard, certain subway lines, as well as bus lines, are shut down. Even public schools are closed for a period of time. Trains are either paralyzed in yards or laid-up in stations throughout the city, and every writer is thinking the same thing, and many are acting on it.

As I stand on the platform of Queens Borough Plaza and watch N trains roll in and out of the station, I see BASE RTW BE outlines on almost every other train. (The same week, while I was on the J train coming home from seeing my parole officer, I looked out the window and, for a hot second, I thought my eyes are playing tricks on me. All I can see are KET and VFR pieces across two cars.) After seeing that, I'm ready to go out and hit shit. There is enough snow on the ground to keep most neighborhoods desert-ed, and, as I'm freshly paroled off work release, I figure going out and doing a few fill-ins wouldn't hurt no body.

Later that day, when I get home I give AKS a call to put him on to my plan. He's with it and we make arrangements to meet up later at night. I have somewhere to go this evening so I get my paint together (a bunch of acorn brown wood savers and a couple Rusto flat whites), put them in a bag and bring them with me so I wouldn't have to come home before meeting him. Around 9 o'clock I give him a call to let him know I'm coming to meet up with him. But by the end of the conversa-tion, AKS has thoroughly convinced himself there is too much snow on the ground. He puts it off for anoth-er night. After the phone call, I con-tinue chilling with some friends, and after about half an hour of watching them smoke blunts and sip forties, I get bored and break out.

By 12:30 I'm on the A train two stops from home. I decide, "The hell with it, lemme' use up all the paint in my bag."

I get off the train in East New York and start taking tags on Pitkin Avenue. As I make my way to Sutter, the tags progress to fill-ins. As I'm throwing an outline up on one of my fill-ins, a car stops and starts. While I'm finishing up what I'm doing, I realize it's the second time that car's been around this block. I put the paint back in my bag and get off the Ave. I turn and quickly walk over to Linden Blvd. I take a few tags on Linden. By this time I only have two cans left, a brown and a white.

I'm four blocks from my house and I'm tired. I decide to call it a night. However, when I walk pass Pitkin Yard, I look up to the side of the firehouse and see a MED outline that's been there since the late 80's. (I wanted that spot for years.) I look across the street where the projects are, to see if any-one was around. It all looks fine. I climb up the fence and start a throw-up when the street light changes. Cars pass by me and I duck just to be safe.

DAILY NEWS

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QUEENS EDITION

EXCLUSIVE

MILLION DOLLAR VANDAL

Robert Morrissey in Transit Police custody.

Three dozen victims show up in court, demand jail time for city's worst graffiti punk

STORY ON PAGES 4 & 5

When the light changes I fill in my throw-up, finish outlining my fill-in, and throw the empty white down into the garbage can and climb down the fence. I had half a can of brown left.

I continue walking home. As I approach the corner of Elderts Lane I glance across Linden Blvd. and notice a burgundy Caprice coming towards me. Immediately, panic envelopes my body. I watch out of the corner of my eye as the brake lights flicker and the car passes me by as a blue and white speed toward me. At that point, I thought that the burgundy Caprice and the Blue and White were after me. The moment I toss my paint-covered gloves under the nearest mailbox, and before I even had a chance to run, the cop car stops. The officer in the passenger seat jumps out with his gun in his hand and tells me don't move and get against the wall. The other cop backs up the car, gets out, and runs up on the sidewalk to assist his partner.

(Apparently there was a robbery in the neighborhood and the perpetrator was wearing the same coat I had on, according to the cops.)

While the po-lice are grilling me about where I live and what I was doing in that neighborhood, the bur-gundy Caprice rolls up on the spot as the officers are getting out of their car, saying they heard the call over the radio and they are wondering if the two blue and whites need assistance. As the blue and whites assure the other cops that they have the situation under control, they tell me I am free to go. The officers from the Caprice get back in their car and drive away.

I start back on track to get home. All of a sudden I hear, "Hey, 'scuse me sir, is your name Robert?"

I answer, "Yeah, I just told the other officers my name." (Later, I found out they knew exactly who I was.) They ask another question. "Hey! Hey, Rob! Do you write graffiti?" Quickly, I answer, "Nah man, what are you crazy?!"

They get out of their car and I know they aren't just regular street cops. They search me and find my last can of paint. They throw me into the car and drive towards where I did that fill-in.

When we get to the fire house the cops begin to look around, ignoring what I did. Again, they start with the questioning, asking me about what I write and such. I try to explain to them that I did not write graffiti, that they had it all wrong. (Since I did that fill-in right outside the train yard, they knew who I was, and thought I had been writing on clean trains.)

We take a stroll down into the yard. All I see are old VINNY tags. (I remem-ber being really surprised that there's vintage shit like that still down there.) However, to these gun-ho cops' dismay, I have nothing at all in the yard. They offer to drive me home. (They knew my address from previous arrests.) In front of my house they hand me back my can of paint and ask me if I bomb any trains and to please remember them, they were ICEMAN and BON-

GOS. I say, "Yeah, OK, whatever. Goodnight."

Exhausted and paranoid, once I get home all I want to do is relax in front of the TV. As I'm changing out of my clothes, I hear someone knocking on my window. A voice follows.

"Robert, come outside. You forgot something."

Right away I know something is not right. BONGOS and ICEMAN are banging on my door. It's almost 3 a.m. and my older brother and mother are upstairs, sleeping. I don't want to wake them up. The cops are screaming, and I'm not thinking clearly, so I open the door a tiny bit.

BONGOS starts talking, "Robert, you lied to us. Now we have to arrest you!" They explain that after they dropped me off, they jetted back to the firehouse to play Dick Tracy and look for empty spray cans. They found the can I threw in the garbage, and they had to arrest me, and I should make it easy on myself and go with them right them without a problem.

My response was, HELL NO! I try to slam the door on them but ICEMAN isn't having it. He manages to wedge his foot into the doorway and kicks the door back open. I run up to the top of the stairs to my bedroom as I scream, "Get Out! You're not allowed in here!" They, however, stand their ground. To make matters worse, my mother wakes up, completely hysterical. I try to explain to her that the cops are illegally in the house and are trying to take me in for something I didn't even do. The officers defend themselves by brainwashing my mother, saying that they are just going to give me a ticket and not arrest me.

I try and try to tell my mom that they are full of shit, that their real intention is to lock me up. I'm up on my staircase and I look over at my mother, who, through her tears manages to ask me, "Robert, why are you doing this to me again?" This was it. I had to go; I was being unfair to the entire family.

The cops handcuff me and asks my mother to go upstairs and look for any spray paint laying around.

I go nuts. I yell at my mother, telling her she didn't have to do that and anything she brought down would further incriminate me. She goes upstairs, though. I guess she just pretended to look around 'cos when she comes down empty handed, she says, "Sorry, couldn't find anything."

Thanks, Ma. I'm shuffled out the door and into the Caprice and the cops ask me where the brown can of paint they gave back to me was, like I'm really going to give it to them. I make up some story about how I threw it into the lot across the street. BONGOS proceeds to whip out his handy-dandy flashlight to go recover this alleged can of paint, like it was the black glove in the O.J. Simpson case. I can no longer control my laughter. Shit is funny! So, ICEMAN turns around with the quickness and says, "Are you trying to make an asshole out of my partner?" and I reply, "No, sir, your partner is already an asshole."

If looks could kill I would've been long dead. He screams out the window to BONGOS, "Lets go, he's jerking us off." On the way to the 75th Precinct the officers are lecturing me about writing and getting in trouble. I'm almost happy to get out of the damn car. I'm escorted to the desk Sgt. and he asks BONGOS what I'm here for. BONGOS says, "Graffiti." and the Desk Sgt. wrinkles his forehead in disbelief as he double checks to make sure he heard BONGOS right. "Graffiti?" he asks.

They place me in a cell a little after 4 a.m. and treat me like I'm a celebrity. All these other Vandal Squad cops show up and peep into the cell to see if it's really me.

Then (I couldn't believe it) they decide to call Detective Mona, the Vandal Squad Sgt., says, "Hey, Steve, we got your buddy here. You know, DESA." All I can think is, "DAMN, get a life."

Just when I think it can't possibly get worse, the infamous Tom and Jerry of the Vandal Squad roll through the door. Jerry starts with his regular routine of trying to be my bestest buddy. He even brings me a can of soda. Then he brings up how AKS is wrecking his clean trains. I start laughing, hard. (AKS didn't even know how lucky he was right then, at home cuddling his pillow. Unfortunately though, I had to come back to reality.) They pull me out of the cell to take my pictures, like I'm at some modeling shoot. They take, like, 25 pictures of me.

After the pictures I'm put back into the cell and I over-hear Jerry on the phone with a reporter from the Daily News. He's telling him that some kid is arrested again for graffiti and this and that.

Finally, they decide to take me over to Central Booking in some down low police van. Luckily, we get stuck in rush hour traffic on Atlantic Ave.. The police aren't as pleased as I am. They turn the sirens on and jet into the middle lane under the LIRR. I'm in no rush to get to Central Booking.

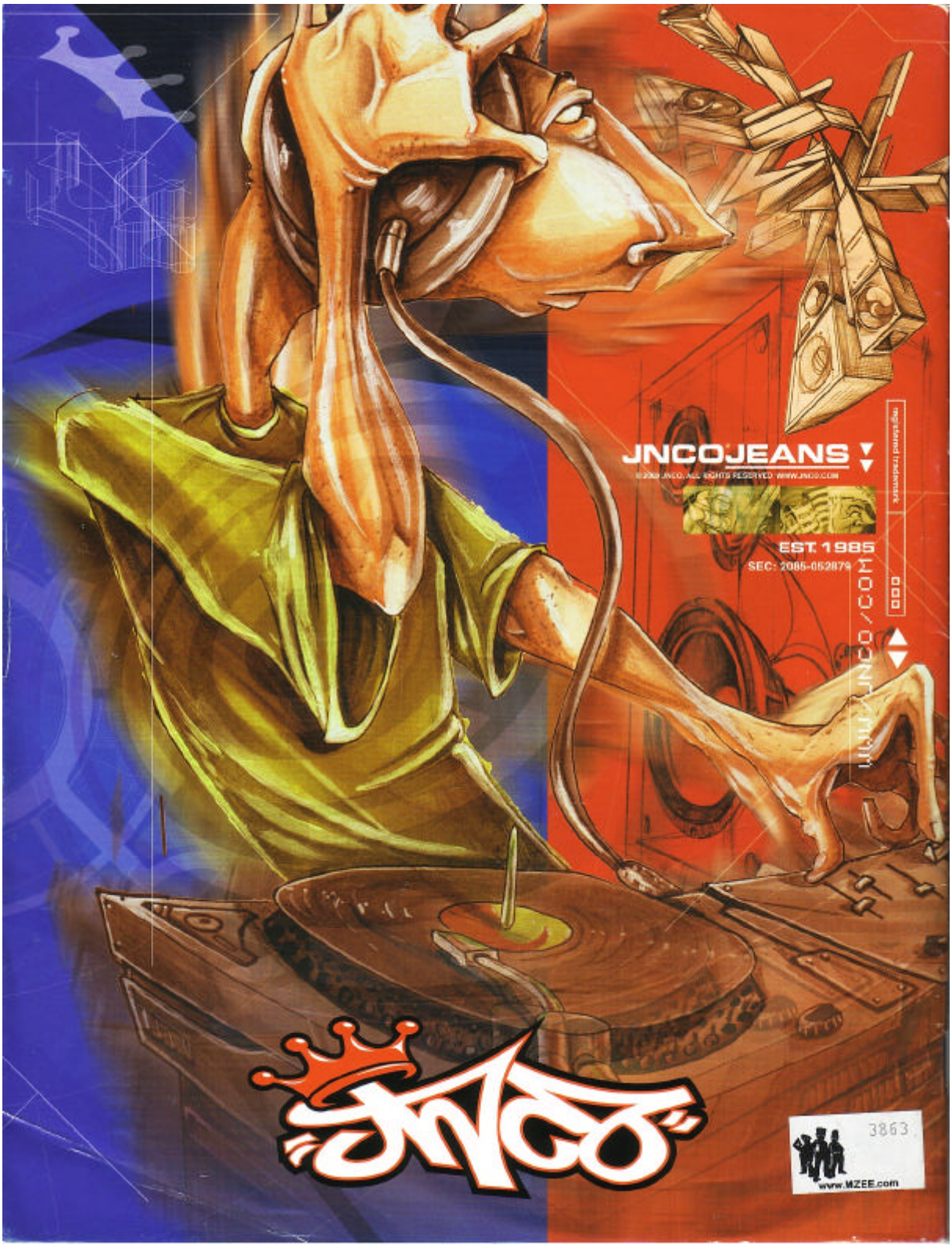
When we arrive I'm shoved into a bullpen with 70 smelly derelicts. After 2 days of being trapped in there, I get to see a judge, which is useless. He posts bail at $50,000, so back in the bull pen I go for some more stress and bologna sandwiches.

It's Sunday and I'm on my way to C-95 on Rikers' Island. When I get to my dorm housing it's midnight and it looks like there's a party on. I mean, people are even dancing to music on their jailhouse walkdogs. As I make my bed some guys come over and ask me if I'm that "Graffiti kid from the newspaper." I tell him I am and ask if there' s a picture of me in the dorm. "This is him." he yells out to his peoples. "Yo, this is that blanquito in the newspaper." This is all I need, a mob of crooks grilling me on my case.

For the next couple of days I'm laid-up till I go to court, where I find out my parole officer put a hold on me, and the only place I'm going is back and forth between court and jail for six months. Finally, when I get my sentence, I receive a six month sentence for violating parole and a year for the graffiti case.

All I had gotten out of playing this graff game is another year in jail and my picture in the paper, whereas I lost $5,000 (for lawyers) a girlfriend and a year of my life.

Just to let everybody know out there don't think this can't happen to you, because it CAN. For everyone who is bombing clean trains and streets, take it from me: Don't mess with the Vandal Squad. Don't get caught. They know who every player in the game is and they'd be glad to see us all in handcuffs. They helped fuck up my life and I'm sure they'd do the same for you.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